

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-16 are presently pending in this application. Claim 4 was previously cancelled. New claims 15 and 16 are added via this Amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 11-14, and further indicating that claims 8 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the indefiniteness rejection. Claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form as new claim 15, and claim 16 depends from claim 15 and is otherwise identical to claim 10. Thus, claims 11-16 should all be indicated as being allowed now.

Claims 1-3 and 5-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner now contends that the language “the full width of the side ring portion” added to claims 1 and 2 in the July 7, 2004 Amendment lacks antecedent basis and is indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.¹

The side ring portion inherently has a “width” even if that width varies along the radial direction. The “full width” simply means from the inside of the ring to the outside of the ring. Claims 1 and 2 further recite that the venting gap opens to the outside

¹ In fact, it was the Examiner who suggested the objected to language. See page 10, lines 14-15 of the April 7, 2004 Office Action, as well as page 9 of the July 7 Amendment.

of the mold. In other words, the side rings form a portion or section of the mold and, therefore, since the venting gap extends across the full width of the side rings, the venting gap opens to the outside of the mold. Thus, Applicants believe that the language added to claims 1 and 2 is clear and definite. In any event, the word 'the' has hereby been changed to --a--, as a path of least resistance.

The prior art rejections of claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9 are the same as in the previous Office Action. The Examiner has, however, apparently changed his mind as to the distinction discussed above, specifically arguing that:

"The recitation of '...to extend across the full width of the side ring portion and open to an outside of the mold' fails to exclude the support 10 of Ladouce or the support illustrated but not numbered in applicant's figure 3."

The Examiner argues that the "network of grooves" (see the paragraph bridging columns 3 and 4 of Ladouce) allow the gas escaping through the gap J to escape to the outside of the support 10. However, this is clearly different from the structure shown in Figs. 1 and 3 of the present application. It is noted that what the Examiner calls a "support" (not numbered) in Fig. 3 is actually a mold placing portion (i.e., a base); it is not part of the mold itself.

One difference between Ladouce and the present invention is that the clearance J in Ladouce extends through the width of the strip 20, but then must pass through the “network of grooves” (described, but not illustrated, in Ladouce) in the support 10, which is part of the mold. See Ladouce’s Abstract. The Examiner also admits this on page 3 of the Office Action. To make this distinction between the present invention and Ladouce clearer, claims 1 and 2 are hereby amended to recite that the venting gap extends across a full width of the side ring portion “so as to” open to an outside of the mold, and wherein “an outer surface of the side ring portion defines an outer surface of the mold.” In contrast, in Ladouce, the outer surface of the strip 20 abuts an inner surface of the support 10 (which is part of the mold as clearly described in Ladouce) and, therefore, does not define an outer surface of the mold.

After reviewing the instant Amendment, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any outstanding issues in an effort to expedite allowance of the subject application.

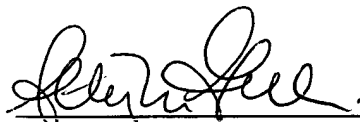
AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.111
U.S. SERIAL NO. 09/993,504

ART UNIT 1733
Q65011

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby earnestly solicited.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees (except the Issue/Publication Fees) to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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